

Yesler Park

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Thaddeus Egging

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Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair
Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair
Brodie Bain
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Theo Lim
John Savo
Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Rachel Gleeson
Martin Regge

Project Description

Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) proposes to build a new 1.7-acre neighborhood park west of the existing Yesler Community Center. The 4.3 million dollar project is designed as part of the Yesler Terrace Master Planned Community, funded through the 2008 Parks and Green Space Levy and a partnership with Seattle Housing Authority (SHA). Construction of the park is expected to begin in late 2016.

Background

Since the commission's September 2014 review and approval of concept design, SPR changed its design team from an in-house team to outside consultants, retaining Site Workshop as lead designer. While many of the basic components of SPR staff's original concept were retained, Site Workshop updated significant portions of the proposal and designs. Accordingly, this meeting provided the first opportunity for the full commission to evaluate the designs since the change in designers.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of the project. The purpose of this meeting is to review the schematic design for Yesler Park and provide feedback to SPR and the design team. At this meeting, the SDC voted 8-0 to approve the schematic design with recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

January 7, 2016

9:00 - 11:00 am

Type

CIP

Phase

Schematic Design

Previous Reviews

[9/16/14](#)

Project Team Present

Mark Brands

Site Workshop

Attendees

Clayton Beaudoin

Site Workshop

Mark Hinshaw

Seattle Housing Authority

Marcia Iwasaki

Office of Arts and Culture

Toby Ressler

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Natalie Ross

Site Workshop

Aimee Rozier

Site Workshop

Michael Shiosaki

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Stephanie Van Dyke

Seattle Housing Authority

January 7, 2016

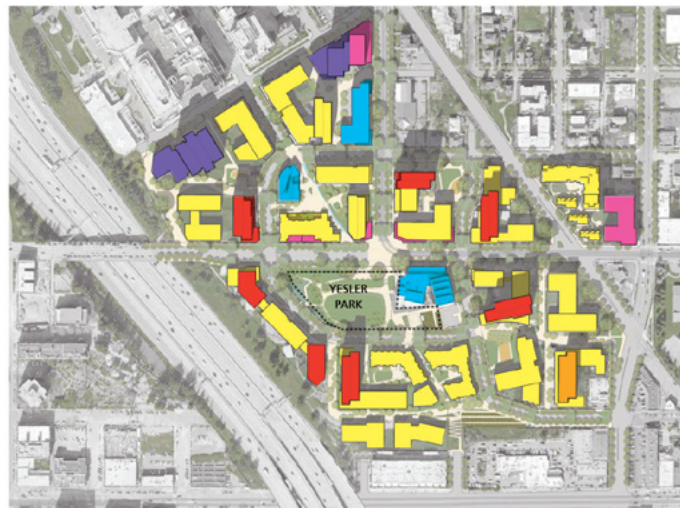


Figure 1: Yesler Terrace master planned community development

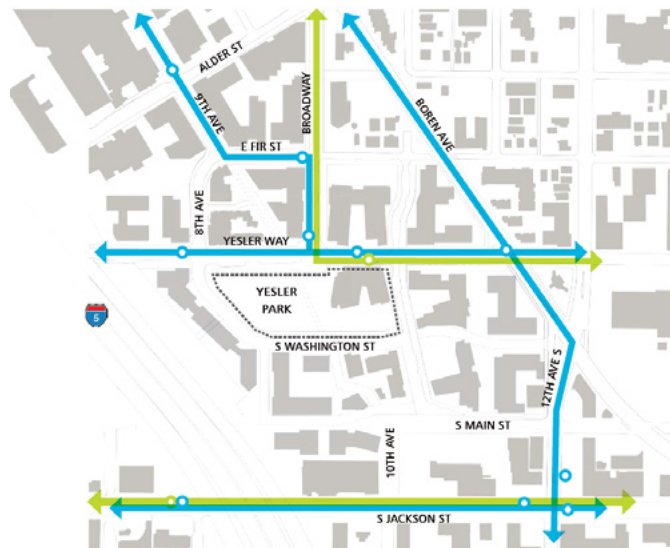


Figure 2: Public transit and vehicular circulation

Summary of Presentation

The proposed design was presented by Mark Brands of Site Workshop. Mr. Brands provided a brief update on the project status, budget and schedule. The SDC reviewed and approved concept design on September 18, 2014. Following this approval the project was put on hold while SPR explored funding and design options. After additional funding was secured, SPR changed the design team from its in-house team and contracted with Site Workshop to continue the planning, design, and construction of Yesler Park. The design development phase is expected to end in early 2016, with the park opening in early 2018.

Yesler Park is a part of the Yesler Terrace Master Planned Community Development. The park, immediately adjacent and connecting to the Yesler Community Center, is located near the First Hill Streetcar Line, pedestrian activity loop, and the 10th Ave. Hillclimb. Unlike the previous plan, which included inwardly focused programming, the updated concept plan focuses on connecting the park with the surrounding community, while retaining much of the original concept and its components. The updated plan provides two distinct areas – an upper plaza area and a lower plaza and lawn. The upper plaza area includes a multi-use plaza, playground, interactive water feature, picnic shelter, and publicly accessible restroom, all designed to be related directly to the Yesler Community Center. The lower plaza, located to the south and west of the Community Center, includes several areas for active and passive recreation such as a soccer field, basketball court, and grassy lawn as well as a parking lot for

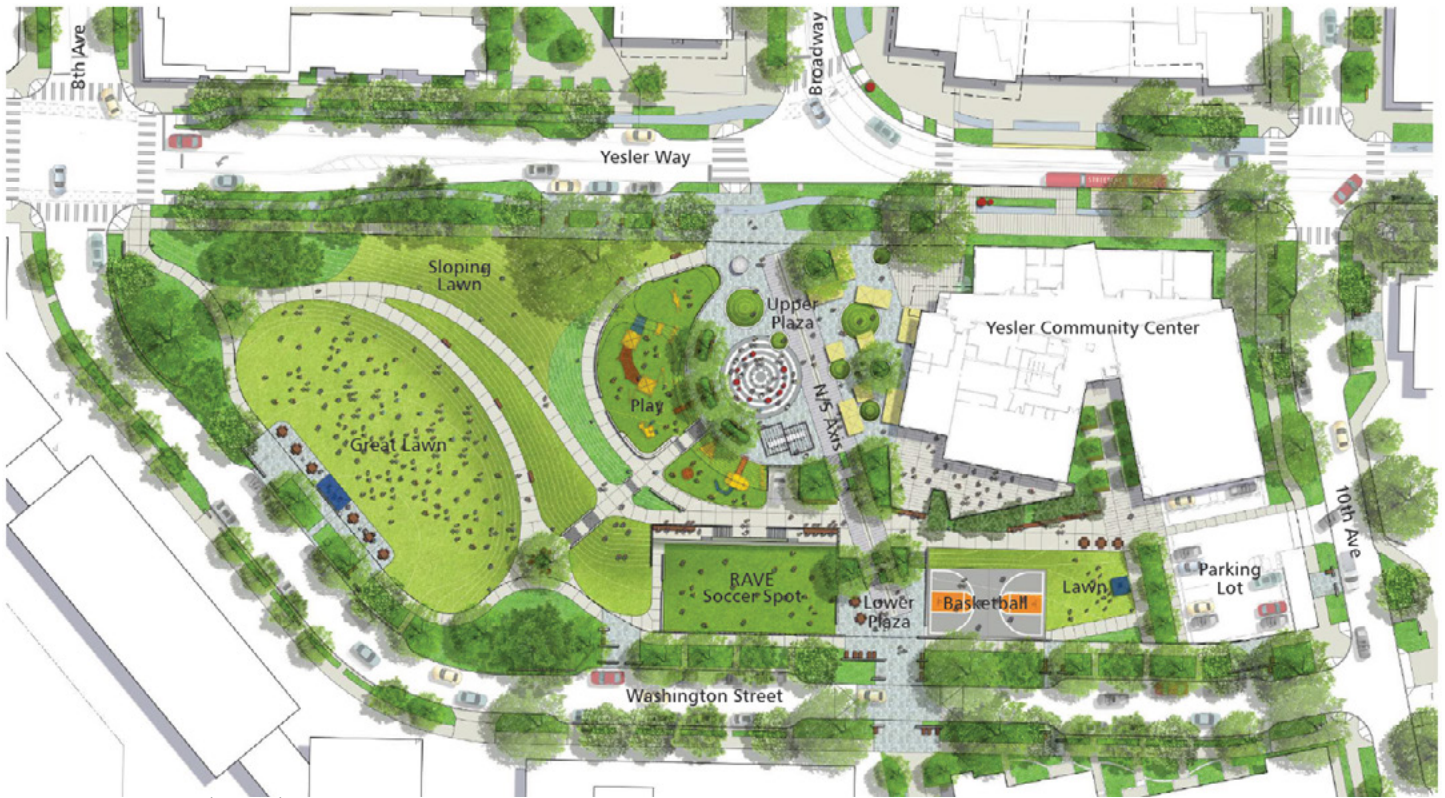


Figure 3: Proposed site plan

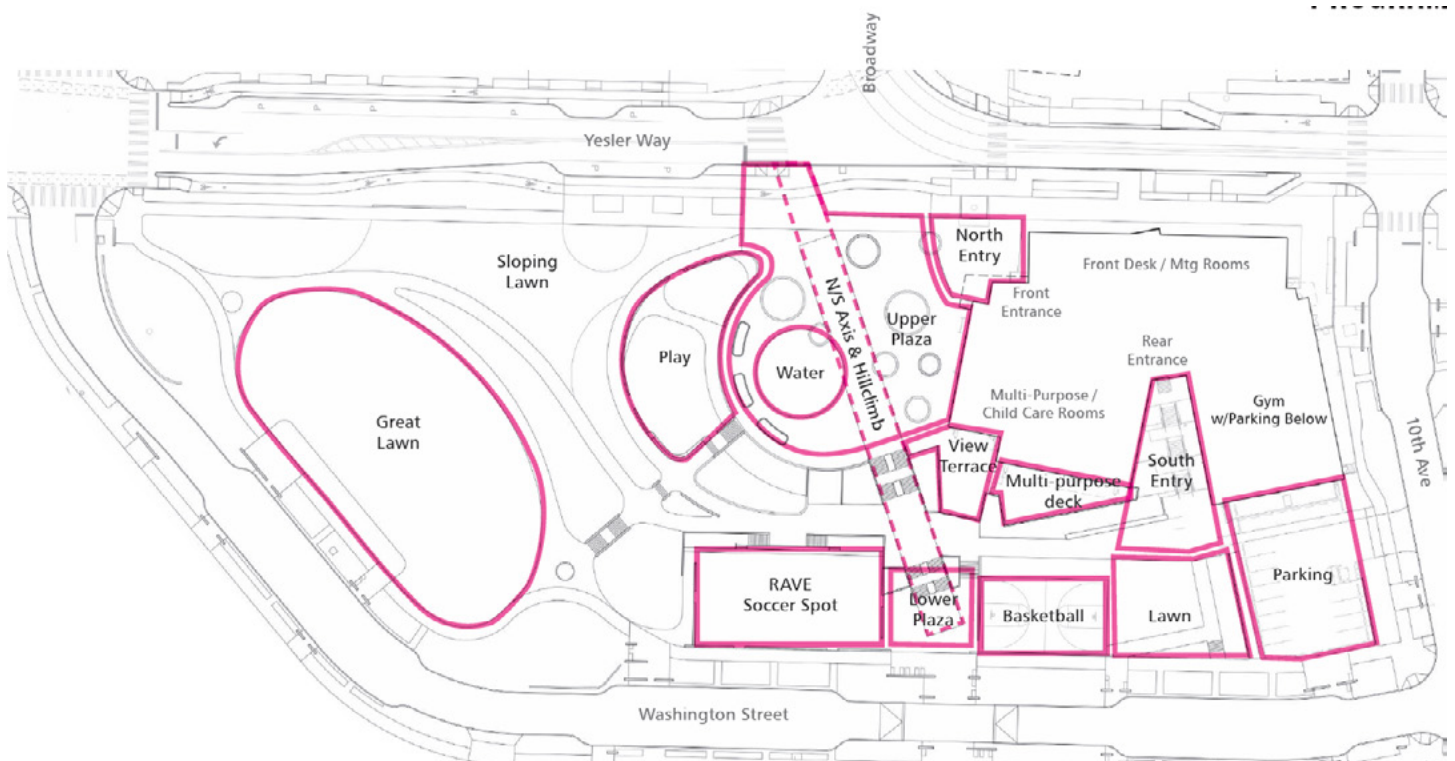


Figure 4: Proposed programming and uses

the community center. The soccer field is provided through a partnership between RAVE and SPR. RAVE is part of the Seattle Sounders and focuses on creating unstructured fields to facilitate street style soccer matches. The design concept also includes a great lawn, which will serve as a gathering space for community events. The great lawn, soccer field, and basketball court are on grade with Washington Street, providing a clear visual connection into the park.

Gathering and programmable spaces, located throughout the site, are designed to facilitate daily use as well as community events and games. The park concept design includes small clusters of picnic tables, seating walls, mounds



Figure 5: Proposed RAVE soccer spot

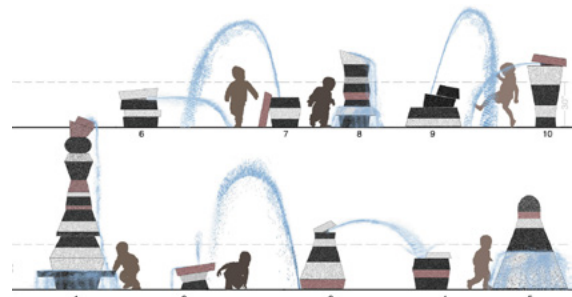
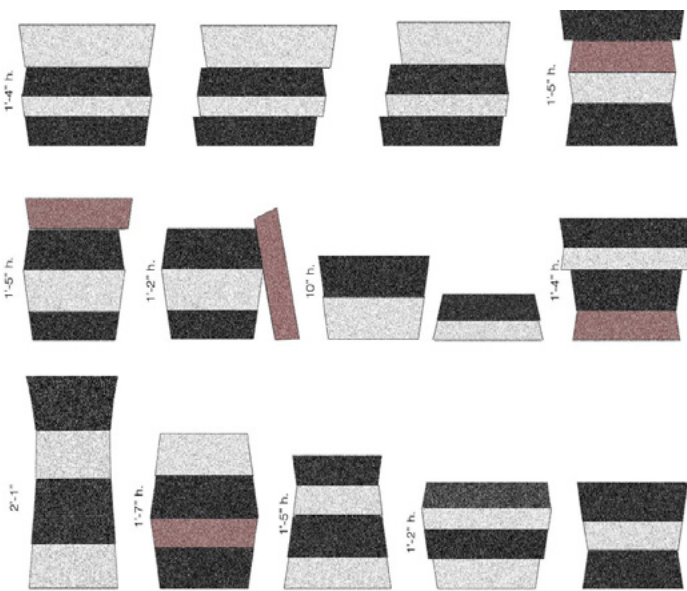


Figure 6: Proposed on-site artwork materials (left), conversation circle (top right), and water feature (bottom right)

constructed out of synthetic turf, and grassy lawns. While clustered picnic areas will only accommodate a small group, the great lawn is designed to accommodate 2,000 to 3,000 people for special community events.

The public art program will include artwork from two artist located throughout the project site. Ela Lamblin’s existing art piece will be relocated near the entrance to the upper plaza at the intersection of Yesler Way and Broadway St. Christine Bourdette will design a conversation circle constructed out of stacked stone discs, ranging from 10 inches to 2 feet in height. Christine will also design art elements to be integrated into the interactive water feature using a similar stacked stone concept. Although not on site, Claudia Fitch’s artwork, “Beads Along a Thread”, located on Broadway St. and Yesler Way, will be visible from the upper plaza within the park. SHA also presented the idea to include an artist-designed mural on the blank wall façade located south of the community center.

Agency Comments

Mark Hinshaw, of SHA, stated it has been a great opportunity to work with SPR and Site Workshop in order to create a terrific design. One of the great things about the current design is it allows people many choices. Mr. Hinshaw said

visitors would be able to find quiet and active areas within the same space. He then stated the design provides space and programming that reflects the social needs of the community as well as the broader needs of the City of Seattle. **Michael Shiosaki**, of SPR, stated that the design concept has combined many different uses into this small site. Mr. Shiosaki said he is very excited to collaborate with the RAVE foundation and hope this will start other partnerships with organizations throughout the city. Having soccer player's partner with kids to help activate this space is wonderful. Mr. Shiosaki believes this has grown into a very exciting project.

Marcia Iwasaki, of OAC, is excited the design team is collaborating with Christine, requesting her assistance to design the water feature.

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Site plan and circulation
- Structures, furnishing, and materials
- Plant materials and sustainability
- Art
- Community engagement

Site plan and circulation

The SDC commended the design team for providing a variety of programmable areas within the park. The Commission is concerned with the placement of several quiet areas near highly active spaces and encouraged the design team to place areas of respite closer to the great lawn and playground.

Overall, the Commission approved of circulation throughout the site. They particularly appreciated the pathways diverging at the northwest corner of the site, which provide for greater circulation throughout the site. The SDC encouraged the design team to widen the area connecting the upper plaza with the community center.

Structures, furnishing, and materials

The Commission is concerned with the design and placement of the picnic shade structure in the upper plaza, specifically how it may compete with the proposed water feature, and its potential for blocking views to Mt. Rainier. While the SDC is encouraged that the artist is involved with the design of the interactive water feature, it is concerned about the inclusion of the steel structure proposed by the landscape architect. Commissioners encouraged the design team to allow the artist to design the water feature in full, rather than having a "generic" steel structure at the center. The SDC also recommend the artist consider placing the water feature elements in a more random, rather than circular form.

The SDC is also concerned with the placement of and materials used for the playground equipment. It recommended the design team integrate the equipment into the surrounding site topography. Commissioners also encouraged the design team to create an exciting and unique experience while using the basic elements of the playground equipment provided.

Plant materials and sustainability

The Commission encouraged the design team to provide more information about stormwater runoff. Commissioners agreed the great lawn will only function as a successful gathering space if it includes the proper drainage.

Art

The SDC agreed with the design team's decision to relocate Ela Lamblin's art piece to a more prominent location. Commissioners are also excited with the increased level of involvement of the water feature from Christine Bourdette. Although the SDC likes the idea of placing a mural on the façade south of the community center, they made clear the mural design should be well thought out and thoughtfully integrated within the surrounding area.

Community engagement

The Commission applauded the partnership between RAVE and SPR to provide a soccer spot. It cautioned the design team and SPR about signage for the RAVE organization, as to not commercialize the project site and that it should be

minimized as sponsor recognition. The Commission also recommended the design team continue engaging with the surrounding community throughout the planning and design process.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for the presentation on schematic design. The Commission appreciated the evolution of the park design, to include opportunities for a diverse group of users, specifically the inclusion of a soccer spot. The SDC also appreciated the care taken to improve circulation and connections through the park as well as connections from the 10th Ave. Hillclimb through Yesler Park. The SDC approved schematic design for Yesler Park, 8-0, with the following recommendations:

1. Provide a more suitable location for areas of respite, currently located between the basketball court and parking lot in the lower plaza. The redesigned and relocated areas should be easily accessible for the elderly and designed to reduce ambient noise.
2. Create visual connections across Yesler Way from the north looking south and through the park and related axis.
3. Relocate the picnic shelter in the upper plaza to improve on circulation through the site, while keeping the shelters part of the larger upper plaza program
4. Consider non-standard play structures that would better integrate with the overall park design. Study ways to incorporate the play area adjacent to the upper plaza more closely with the surrounding topography
5. Widen the opening between the Community Center viewing terrace and upper plaza to further integrate the Community Center with the park and to make it more accessible for park users.
6. Look for ways to expand the artist's work and influence on the entire water feature sculpture in the upper plaza.
7. Ensure the great lawn and associated uphill topography have adequate drainage to stay dry year-round
8. Provide a sufficient amount of seating near the upper plaza and playground for the elderly and caregivers
9. Minimize signage related to the RAVE project around the soccer field to be as unobtrusive as possible
10. Ensure the mural design for the south wall, located near the basketball court, reflects the local context and cultures of the surrounding communities
11. Preserve, enhance, and highlight views to Mt. Rainier from the upper plaza
12. Continue engaging with community to ensure they are kept informed and able to provide feedback throughout the planning and design process